

# **Exhibit 1**

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**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA  
GREAT FALLS DIVISION**

WESTERN ORGANIZATION OF  
RESOURCE COUNCILS et al.,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

UNITED STATES BUREAU OF  
LAND MANAGEMENT,

Defendant,

and

STATE OF WYOMING,

Intervenor-Defendant.

Case No. 4:20-cv-00076-BMM-JTJ

**DECLARATION OF SHANNON  
ANDERSON**

I, Shannon Anderson, hereby declare:

1. The facts and opinions set forth in this declaration are based on my personal knowledge and experience. If called as a witness in these proceedings, I could and would testify competently to these facts and opinions.

2. I have been a dues-paying member of the Powder River Basin Resource Council (“PRBRC”) since 2008. As a member of PRBRC, I am also a member of the Western Organization of Resource Councils (“WORC”) as PRBRC is WORC’s Wyoming member organization. I have also been an individual member of the Sierra Club since 2014 and prior to that time I was part of my father’s lifetime family membership in the organization. I am a member of these organizations because they work to protect landscapes, wildlife, and natural resources in special areas that I care about, including the Powder River Basin of Northeast Wyoming.

3. I was born and raised in Sheridan, Wyoming, and I moved back in October 2007. Sheridan is a town on the western edge of the Powder River Basin, an area that largely encompasses Sheridan, Johnson, and Campbell Counties in Northeast Wyoming, which make up the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Buffalo Field Office’s jurisdiction. The town of Sheridan, where my home is located, is within the BLM Buffalo Field Office’s jurisdiction.

4. I moved back to Wyoming primarily so I could enjoy hiking, camping, and recreating in our state's abundant and beautiful natural areas. As a Unitarian Universalist, my visits to natural areas are important for spiritual renewal. Spending time outdoors in a quiet natural environment also increases my mental health and wellness. The need to be outdoors and connected to nature has only grown in importance over the years for my mental health and well-being. Over the past year and half during the pandemic, like most Americans, I have refrained from long trips and have opted to stay close to home. Almost all of my recreation over this recent time has been in and around the area covered by the BLM Buffalo Field Office's Resource Management Plan. Trips to the prairie ecosystems managed by the BLM Buffalo Field Office have been especially important to me over these pandemic times because the open spaces have given me a sense of freedom. Being in the prairie, seeing an open vista, taking a walk up a hillside with my dog, and smelling the sagebrush landscape has provided tremendous spiritual renewal to me over the past year and a half.

5. I am very familiar with the BLM Buffalo Field Office's Resource Management Plan, and its ups and downs through the court system. For this version of the plan – the remand version - I wrote PRBRC's comments. Unfortunately, the plan has changed very little since previous versions, in spite of the court directives to look at new alternatives and options. Based on my

professional involvement in the project, I am confident I can speak to how this plan will impact my personal recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual uses of the Powder River Basin. I believe that BLM's Buffalo resource management plan in its current form will negatively impact my ability to enjoy the area and its wildlife and natural resources in the future.

6. One of my favorite places to recreate is in the area of BLM managed land adjacent to Schnoover Road in Johnson County. It's a shorter drive from Sheridan, and has relatively clear roads most of the year. The area has become a frequent outing during the pandemic because the area has tremendous scenic quality with views of the Bighorn mountains and Powder River Breaks country. Here are photos of the area taken by me on October 22, 2021:



Although checker-boarded, the public land sections of the area are well marked and it is easy to park your car along the road and take a quick walk into the prairie. I visited this area this past spring to listen to meadowlarks and other returning

songbirds, and I visited the area over the summer in June and August to get some much-needed outside time. The fall is also a time I enjoy visiting the area, and my last visit was just this month on October 22. I plan to return regularly to the area in the months and years to come because I greatly enjoy spending time in the area, listening to the song birds, seeing eagles and other raptors, and watching pronghorn and mule deer. This area is special to me because of the public land and intact prairie ecosystem.

7. Unfortunately, the BLM Buffalo Field Office's Resource Management Plan continues to authorize oil and gas leasing and development in the Powder River Breaks area, and in fact it loosens some of the oil and gas lease stipulations that previously limited development in areas with sensitive soils and steep slopes or prevented development in important wildlife habitat. With oil and gas development on leased parcels in this area, habitat will be disturbed through well pad construction and the creation of access roads to well sites, which will adversely impact my ability to see wildlife in the area. The area around Schnoover Road has some lingering coalbed methane development and deep oil development is fast encroaching. I saw a new double-decker well pad during my trip on October 22, 2021 from an area where I was hiking. I could also hear trucks and other noise

in the background from that spot. Here is a picture of that well pad, taken by me on October 22, 2021:



8. Oil and gas leasing and development, as authorized – and in some ways encouraged – through this Resource Management Plan will create noise, light, and visual impacts in and nearby areas that I visit throughout the Powder River Basin, affecting my ability to enjoy the area. I know what impacts will occur because I have been in areas of oil and gas development in the Powder River Basin many times before. Noise, light, and visual impacts, along with truck traffic and other impacts, negatively affects my ability to enjoy the areas I like to recreate, and will make it less likely for me to return for the important personal reasons I discussed above.

9. I regularly visit the Powder River Basin coal mines, both for personal and professional reasons. When I visit the middle and southern Powder River



Basin mines in the Buffalo Field Office, I also visit the public lands nearby, including the Thunder Basin National Grasslands. I visit the mines year-round, at least 3 to 4 times per year, but I greatly enjoy visits in late spring and early summer. I often climb up a hill on public land nearby to the Black Thunder Mine to look out at the vistas. I will often find a nice shady spot under a pine tree to picnic under and I take solace in hearing the migrating songbirds, smelling the sagebrush, viewing the wildflowers, and watching young deer and antelope. Public lands near the mines are also an important place for me to visit as they allow me to take stock in being in nature so close to largescale development. Here is a photo of the Thunder Basin National Grasslands near the coal mines:



10. On these visits to public land near the mines, I can witness the impacts federal coal leasing brings to the planning area. I often witness hazy days, or days with increased dust in the air, especially if it is windy. The air pollution reaches the



public land areas I visit and I can often see the mine haze from these areas. I have also seen pollution clouds caused by coal blasts as far away as the Rochelle Hills area of the Thunder Basin National Grassland given the size of the blasts. Visually, the magnitude of the mines is staggering - with a large human presence caused by a maze of train tracks, pits, roads, and facilities. I can often see this development from the public land areas I visit. Here is a photo I took after a short hike in the Grasslands to see some prickly pear flowers:



11. I last visited the Thunder Basin National Grassland near the coal mines in June 2021 and I have plans to return next month in November 2021 and in the months and years to come. Regrettably, the BLM Buffalo Field Office Resource Management Plan, even after the remand, does nothing to limit coal leasing and development in the Powder River Basin. Instead, it continues an old

policy that hold all lands next to existing mines open to leasing. This means that over the course of the plan, the mines of the Powder River Basin will expand, further negatively impacting land, air, and water resources. The mines will continue to cause aesthetic and other adverse impacts to public land areas I visit. For instance, as the mines expand onto the Thunder Basin National Grassland and other public lands, those public areas will become off limits to public recreation. I have already seen public roads that I used to travel on to get to areas I would recreate closed because of expansion of the mines and the opening of Peabody's School Creek Mine.

12. I also regularly visit other areas in the Powder River Basin that are impacted by the Resource Management Plan. I visit ranches of split estate landowners with federal oil and gas development on their land or nearby to their land. I also take regular drives on the county roads and state highways of the area, both for professional and personal reasons, and on these drives I witness federal oil and gas development. Over the course of my lifetime, coalbed methane, and now deep oil and gas development, has transformed what was a peaceful prairie landscape into an industrialized one. As a result of increased industrialization of the Powder River Basin, I have witnessed the tremendous degradation of the region's air quality, and while I am concerned about many of the impacts that come with development, I am particularly concerned about further air quality

negative impacts that will result from increased development authorized by the Resource Management Plan. Here is a photo of a gas processing facility flare visible from a state highway I was driving on. I took the photo in June 2021:



13. I also am concerned about increased truck traffic on county roads and state highways that is caused by development of federal energy resources in the Powder River Basin. I have seen first-hand how increased traffic from big semi-trucks carrying water, oil, or other materials to and from energy-related job sites and pickups carrying employees will cause dangerous road conditions because the small trucks often speed and the big trucks often go slow, forcing you to pass or be passed for the length of the roads. County roads are especially dangerous with this increased traffic because of dust. Because of the whiteout conditions caused by the dust, it is often safer for me to pull the car over and let the truck pass then to try and drive past it. This means I often get to where I need to get in a slower manner, but at least I am able to arrive alive.

14. In addition to these direct personal impacts to places I care about and visit, I am also concerned about the Resource Management Plan's approval – and facilitation – of increased fossil fuel development because that development will exacerbate climate change. I am very concerned about climate change and believe BLM can play a greater role in considering options and alternatives to better prevent the climate crisis. This is important to me for many reasons, but from a personal selfish reason, climate change has fueled drought in my area as well as led to forest fire caused haze and smoke. This past summer was especially bad, with many days too hot and dry to be outside and the smoke preventing outdoor recreation. My town of Sheridan was regularly under air quality warnings. I also had to spend more money on my water bill to keep my flower gardens alive. I fear this will be the “new normal” of a Western U.S. summer if we don't do more to combat climate change.

15. I firmly agree with the legal challenge filed against the Bureau of Land Management's Buffalo Field Office resource management plan and environmental impact statement by PRBRC, WORC, Sierra Club, and others. Based on my review, I believe the BLM has not conducted an in-depth study of the impacts of fossil fuel development on the environment and human health in this area, as well as the impacts to our climate, which greatly concerns me. If the court remands the Buffalo resource management plan and environmental impact

statement for further consideration, BLM could fully consider an alternative that reduces fossil fuel leasing and development in the planning area. I also believe that a successful legal challenge will help achieve better mitigation of impacts or improved environmental analysis, which will help protect the area's wildlife, land, air, and water resources that are important to me and my ability to enjoy recreating in the planning area.

I declare under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that the foregoing is to true and correct.

Dated: October 28, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Anderson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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Shannon Anderson